

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently amended) ~~The steam cooking apparatus of claim 1,~~ A steam cooking apparatus comprising:

steam generating means that generates steam from water fed thereinto from water feeding means and that feeds the steam into a heating chamber in which an article-to-be-heated is heated;

first time counting means that counts a retention time for which the water present inside the steam generating means is retained there;

water draining means that drains the water inside the steam generating means; and

controlling means that controls operation of the water draining means,

wherein when the retention time counted by the first time counting means has reached a predetermined time, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means,

wherein the first time counting means counts, as a first retention time, a time for which the water fed into the steam generating means before evaporation thereby the water that is fed from the water feeding means and retained inside the steam generating means before generation of the steam by the steam generating means and that contains chlorine is retained, and

wherein when the first retention time has reached a first predetermined time set with respect to the water, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

3. (Currently amended) ~~The steam cooking apparatus of claim 1,~~ A steam cooking apparatus comprising:

steam generating means that generates steam from water fed thereinto from water feeding means and that feeds the steam into a heating chamber in which an article-to-be-heated is heated;

first time counting means that counts a retention time for which the water present inside the steam generating means is retained there;

water draining means that drains the water inside the steam generating means; and

controlling means that controls operation of the water draining means,
wherein when the retention time counted by the first time counting means has reached a
predetermined time, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside
the steam generating means,

wherein the first time counting means counts, as a second retention time, a time for which
~~the water retained inside the steam generating means after evaporation thereby~~ the water that is
retained inside the steam generating means after completion of generation of the steam by the
steam generating means and that has chlorine contained therein reduced by evaporation is
retained, and

wherein when the second retention time has reached a second predetermined time set
with respect to the water, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water
inside the steam generating means.

4. (Currently amended) ~~The steam cooking apparatus of claim 1,~~ A steam cooking
apparatus comprising:

steam generating means that generates steam from water fed thereinto from water feeding
means and that feeds the steam into a heating chamber in which an article-to-be-heated is heated;

first time counting means that counts a retention time for which the water present inside
the steam generating means is retained there;

water draining means that drains the water inside the steam generating means; and

controlling means that controls operation of the water draining means,

wherein when the retention time counted by the first time counting means has reached a
predetermined time, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside
the steam generating means,

wherein the first time counting means counts, as a first retention time, a time for which
~~the water fed into the steam generating means before evaporation thereby~~ the water that is fed
from the water feeding means and retained inside the steam generating means before generation
of the steam by the steam generating means and that contains chlorine is retained, and also
counts, as a second retention time, a time for which ~~the water retained inside the steam~~

~~generating means after evaporation thereby the water that is retained inside the steam generating means after completion of generation of the steam by the steam generating means and that has the chlorine contained therein reduced by evaporation~~ is retained, according to operation status of the steam cooking apparatus, and

wherein the controlling means selects one of the first and second retention times, and selects one of a first predetermined time set with respect to the water fed into the steam generating means before evaporation the water that is fed from the water feeding means and retained inside the steam generating means before generation of the steam by the steam generating means and that contains chlorine and a second predetermined time set with respect to ~~the water retained inside the steam generating means after evaporation~~ the water that is retained inside the steam generating means after completion of generation of the steam by the steam generating means and that has the chlorine contained therein reduced by evaporation, and when the selected retention time has reached the selected predetermined time, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

5. (Currently amended) The steam cooking apparatus of ~~claim 1~~ claim 2, further comprising:

water temperature detecting means that measures a water temperature of the water inside the steam generating means,

wherein

when the water temperature detected by the water temperature detecting means is equal to or higher than a predetermined temperature, the controlling means stops the water draining means from draining the water inside the steam generating means.

6-13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently amended) The steam cooking apparatus of ~~one of claims 1 to 13~~ claim 2, further comprising:

a water drain tank in which the water that is drained by the water draining means and that is to be disposed of is collected; and

information detecting means that detects information on the water drain tank or on the water inside the water drain tank,

wherein the water feeding means comprises a water tank in which water to be fed to inside the steam generating means is stored,

wherein the water drain tank is provided separately from the water tank of the water feeding means, and

wherein according to the information detected by the information detecting means, the controlling means controls drainage of the water inside the steam generating means by the water draining means.

15. (Original) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 14,

wherein

the information detecting means includes an attachment state detector that detects an attachment state of the water drain tank, and

when the attachment state detector detects that the water drain tank is attached to the steam cooking apparatus, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

16. (Original) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 14,

wherein

the information detecting means includes a water level detector that detects a water level of the water inside the water drain tank, and

when the water level detector detects that the water level of the water inside the water drain tank is equal to or lower than a predetermined water level, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

17. (Original) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 14, further comprising:
indicating means that indicates a warning when the information detecting means detects that the water drain tank is not attached to the steam cooking apparatus or that a water level of the water inside the water drain tank is higher than a predetermined water level.

18. (Original) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:
a movable member that changes a position of the water level detector as the water drain tank is put into or taken out of the steam cooking apparatus.

19. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 3, further comprising:
water temperature detecting means that measures a water temperature of the water inside the steam generating means,
wherein
when the water temperature detected by the water temperature detecting means is equal to or higher than a predetermined temperature, the controlling means stops the water draining means from draining the water inside the steam generating means.

20. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 3, further comprising:
a water drain tank in which the water that is drained by the water draining means and that is to be disposed of is collected; and
information detecting means that detects information on the water drain tank or on the water inside the water drain tank,
wherein the water feeding means comprises a water tank in which water to be fed to inside the steam generating means is stored,
wherein the water drain tank is provided separately from the water tank of the water feeding means, and
wherein according to the information detected by the information detecting means, the controlling means controls drainage of the water inside the steam generating means by the water draining means.

21. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 20,
wherein

the information detecting means includes an attachment state detector that detects an attachment state of the water drain tank, and

when the attachment state detector detects that the water drain tank is attached to the steam cooking apparatus, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

22. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 20,
wherein

the information detecting means includes a water level detector that detects a water level of the water inside the water drain tank, and

when the water level detector detects that the water level of the water inside the water drain tank is equal to or lower than a predetermined water level, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

23. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 20, further comprising:

indicating means that indicates a warning when the information detecting means detects that the water drain tank is not attached to the steam cooking apparatus or that a water level of the water inside the water drain tank is higher than a predetermined water level.

24. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 22, further comprising:

a movable member that changes a position of the water level detector as the water drain tank is put into or taken out of the steam cooking apparatus.

25. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 4, further comprising:

water temperature detecting means that measures a water temperature of the water inside the steam generating means,

wherein

when the water temperature detected by the water temperature detecting means is equal to or higher than a predetermined temperature, the controlling means stops the water draining means from draining the water inside the steam generating means.

26. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 4, further comprising:

a water drain tank in which the water that is drained by the water draining means and that is to be disposed of is collected; and

information detecting means that detects information on the water drain tank or on the water inside the water drain tank,

wherein the water feeding means comprises a water tank in which water to be fed to inside the steam generating means is stored,

wherein the water drain tank is provided separately from the water tank of the water feeding means, and

wherein according to the information detected by the information detecting means, the controlling means controls drainage of the water inside the steam generating means by the water draining means.

27. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 26,

wherein

the information detecting means includes an attachment state detector that detects an attachment state of the water drain tank, and

when the attachment state detector detects that the water drain tank is attached to the steam cooking apparatus, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

28. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 26,

wherein

the information detecting means includes a water level detector that detects a water level of the water inside the water drain tank, and

when the water level detector detects that the water level of the water inside the water drain tank is equal to or lower than a predetermined water level, the controlling means makes the water draining means drain the water inside the steam generating means.

29. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 26, further comprising:

indicating means that indicates a warning when the information detecting means detects that the water drain tank is not attached to the steam cooking apparatus or that a water level of the water inside the water drain tank is higher than a predetermined water level.

30. (New) The steam cooking apparatus of claim 28, further comprising:

a movable member that changes a position of the water level detector as the water drain tank is put into or taken out of the steam cooking apparatus.

31. (New) A steam cooking apparatus comprising:

steam generating device that generates steam from water fed thereinto from a water feeding device and that feeds the steam into a heating chamber in which an article-to-be-heated is heated;

first time counter that counts a retention time for which the water present inside the steam generating device is retained there;

water draining device that drains the water inside the steam generating device; and

controller that controls operation of the water draining device,

wherein when the retention time counted by the first time counter has reached a predetermined time, the controller makes the water draining device drain the water inside the steam generating device,

wherein the first time counter counts, as a first retention time, a time for which the water that is fed from the water feeding device and retained inside the steam generating device before generation of the steam by the steam generating device and that contains chlorine is retained, and

wherein when the first retention time has reached a first predetermined time set with respect to the water, the controller makes the water draining device drain the water inside the steam generating device.

32. (New) A steam cooking apparatus comprising:

steam generating device that generates steam from water fed thereinto from water feeding device and that feeds the steam into a heating chamber in which an article-to-be-heated is heated;

first time counter that counts a retention time for which the water present inside the steam generating device is retained there;

water draining device that drains the water inside the steam generating device; and

controller that controls operation of the water draining device,

wherein when the retention time counted by the first time counter has reached a predetermined time, the controller makes the water draining device drain the water inside the steam generating device,

wherein the first time counter counts, as a second retention time, a time for which the water that is retained inside the steam generating device after completion of generation of the steam by the steam generating device and that has chlorine contained therein reduced by evaporation is retained, and

wherein when the second retention time has reached a second predetermined time set with respect to the water, the controller makes the water draining device drain the water inside the steam generating device.

33. (New) A steam cooking apparatus comprising:

steam generating device that generates steam from water fed thereinto from water feeding device and that feeds the steam into a heating chamber in which an article-to-be-heated is heated;

first time counter that counts a retention time for which the water present inside the steam generating device is retained there;

water draining device that drains the water inside the steam generating device; and

controller that controls operation of the water draining device,

wherein when the retention time counted by the first time counter has reached a predetermined time, the controller makes the water draining device drain the water inside the steam generating device,

wherein the first time counter counts, as a first retention time, a time for which the water that is fed from the water feeding device and retained inside the steam generating device before generation of the steam by the steam generating device and that contains chlorine is retained, and also counts, as a second retention time, a time for which the water that is retained inside the steam generating device after completion of generation of the steam by the steam generating device and that has the chlorine contained therein reduced by evaporation is retained, according to operation status of the steam cooking apparatus, and

wherein the controller selects one of the first and second retention times, and selects one of a first predetermined time set with respect to the water that is fed from the water feeding device and retained inside the steam generating device before generation of the steam by the steam generating device and that contains chlorine and a second predetermined time set with respect to the water that is retained inside the steam generating device after completion of generation of the steam by the steam generating device and that has the chlorine contained therein reduced by evaporation, and when the selected retention time has reached the selected predetermined time, the controller makes the water draining device drain the water inside the steam generating device.